1: Orans E-5 (1957-1958) 1965
AW42 Santal AW42

closely paralleling that of their Hindu neighbors. On the other hand, their social organization is relatively lacking in the cleavages of caste which are so prevalent all about them. Apart from the village, which is usually composed of a number of patrilineal kin-groups, territorial organization is weakly developed, and the tribe as a whole has never been politically unified so far as historical records indicate.

Even as a unique people the Santal merit special attention. Numbering today over three million, the region they occupy contains the richest deposits of iron, coal and other crucial industrial minerals in all of India. The chief source of their livelihood, at least since the nineteenth century, has been settled agriculture. Prior to the nineteenth century, hunting was also an important livelihood activity, but the great increase in the region's population and subsequent reduction of forest areas has made game extremely scarce; it is now difficult for the inhabitants even to obtain materials for fuel and building purposes. Though the chief source of food and cash is the annual rice crop, a few vegetables are also grown and some fruit trees maintained. Some villages are near enough to a river for fish to be readily obtained, while some villages stock their local ponds. Even prior to the introduction of modern industry in the region, the Santal had ceased to be economically independent. Although they once did some pottery making, weaving, and even iron smelting, they have come to rely almost exclusively on various local Hindu castes for these material products. Women from several low Hindu castes are used frequently as midwives. While almost no Santal are ritually served by Brahmin priests, itinerant Hindu holy men (*sadhu*) visit many Santal villages, consulting horoscopes and offering prayers for a fee or donation.

Most Santal are still agriculturists, but some have turned to

2; Skrefsrud M-5 (1870-1871) 1942 AW42 Santal AW42

539 he went down in the water; having gone down he worked bringing it up in his claws; all the earth was dissolved.

Thereupon Ṭhakur called the raghoṛ boar fish[4]. He came. Having come he said to Ṭhakur: "Why did you call me, Ṭhakur?" Ṭhakur said to him: "Would you be willing to bring up earth?" The raghoṛ boar fish answered him: "If you tell me to do so, I might bring it up". Then having gone down in the water he bit (the earth); he was bringing some of it in his mouth and some on his back; all the earth was dissolved. Since that time the boar fishes have no scales on their body.

Thereupon Ṭhakur called the stone-crab. He came. Having come he said to Ṭhakur: "Why have you called me, Ṭhakur?" Ṭhakur said to him: "Would you be willing to bring up earth?" The crab answered Ṭhakur: "If you tell me to do so, I might bring it up". Then having gone down in the water he worked bringing it up in his claws; all the earth was dissolved.

Thereupon Ṭhakur called the earthworm. He came. Having come he said to Ṭhakur: "Why did you call me, Ṭhakur?" Ṭhakur said to him: "Would you be willing to bring up earth?" The earthworm answered Ṭhakur: "If you tell me to do so, I might bring it up, provided the tortoise stands on the water".

Thereupon Ṭhakur called the tortoise. He came. Having come he said to Ṭhakur: "Why have you called me, Ṭhakur?" Ṭhakur said to him: "No one is able to bring the earth up. The earthworm has promised to bring it up, provided you will stand on the water". The tortoise answered Ṭhakur: "If you tell me to do so, I might stand. Then he stood on the water. When he had taken his stand there Ṭhakur chained his four legs in the four directions. The tortoise became immovably quiet on the water. Then the earthworm went down to bring up the earth; he reached the earth. Now he had put his tail on the back of the tortoise, and with his mouth down below he is eating earth, and this he brings out on the back of the tortoise. Then it was spread out and fixed like a hard film. He continued to bring up earth; he brought up enough for the whole earth.[5] Then he stopped.

Thereupon Ṭhakur caused the earth to be harrowed level. By continual harrowing some was heaped up on the implements; this became mountains. Then when the earth had been brought up and levelled, the foam that was floating on the surface of the water stuck to the earth, and as Ṭhakur sowed sirom seed[6] on this foam the sirom plant sprang up first (before all other plants). After this he let the dhubi grass[7] be sown and come up; after this the karam tree[8], thereupon the tope sarjom, the labar atnaṛ, the laṛea matkom[9], and after this all kinds of vegetation. The earth became firm. In all places

[4] The Santals know a fish called so; this is the Silurus glanis. I know no English name. [5] The foreign influence in the story seems here evident. [6] Sirom is Andropogon muricatus, Retz. [7] The dhubi grass, Cynodon dactylon, Pers. [8] Adina cordifolia, Hook. f. & B. [9] Sarjom is Shorea robusta, Gaertn.; the prefixed tope is used in the meaning of "cut off", or, "short"; atnaṛ is Terminalia tomentosa, W. & A.; labar means "highly coloured". Matkom is Bauhinia latifolia, Roxb; laṛea means "crooked", or, "bent".

[825 137 193]

2: Skrefarud M-5 (1870-1871) 1942 AW42 Santal AW42

where there was water, there he let soda be put, and in all places where water was bubbling up, there he let it be closed up by pressing pieces of rock down on it. 539

Thereupon, having made a nest in a clump of the sirom plants, the two birds laid two eggs. The female bird would sit on the eggs, and the male bird would find and bring food. Keeping on in this way they hatched the eggs: O mother! two human beings were born, one boy and one girl. Then both of them sang:

O dear dear, on the sea,
O dear dear, these two human beings,
O dear dear, have been brought into the world,
O dear dear, these two human beings,
O dear dear, where are they to be put?

O dear dear, you two please tell him,
O dear dear, the great Ṭhakur Jiu,
O dear dear, the two have been brought into the world,
O dear dear, these two human beings,
O dear dear, where are they to be put?

So they implored Ṭhakur saying: "How shall we two support these two human beings?" Ṭhakur gave them some cotton and said to them: "Whatever you two eat, press the juice out of these things and make a place on the cotton wet therewith, and put this into their mouths to suck." By sucking and getting food in this way they grew and commenced to walk. But as they were growing the anxiety of the two birds increased, viz., where they should put the two when they grew up.

So they besought Ṭhakur, and he said to them: "Do fly round and find for us a place for them to stay. Then they flew towards the setting of the sun; they discovered Hihiṛi Pipiṛi. Having returned they told Ṭhakur of this. He said to them: "Do take them there". Then they took them along carrying them on their backs. They put them down and left them there. What became of Hāṛ Hāṣil, this the ancestors of old have not told us; therefore we do not know.

The names of these two human beings were Haṛam and Ayo[10]. Some people call them Pilcu Haṛam and Pilcu Buḍhi[11]. There in Hihiṛi Pipiṛi they grew up eating the grain of the sumtu bukuḍ grass and the ears of the sama grass[12]. They had no clothes, they were both naked; still they felt no shame, and they lived in great peace.

[10] Haṛam is the common word for an old or elderly man; Ayo means in Santali "mother", a word borrowed from an Aryan language. [11] Pilcu haṛam and Pilcu buḍhi are the common designations of the first parents. Haṛam is explained above; buḍhi is the common word for an older, especially married woman; pilcu means "small, tiny". Buḍhi is an Aryan word. [12] The sumtu bukuḍ grass is Rhaphis aegyptiaca, Pers., and sama grass Panicum colonum, L.

[192] [77] [137]

2: Skrefsrud M-5 (1870-1871) 1942 AW42 Santal AW42

539

So they lived on; living on they grew up and became big. Haṛam on his side was in the habit of going with the boys to hunt in one direction, and in another direction Buḍhi on her side was going with the girls to pluck and bring vegetables and leaves, and when it became evening they used to come together at home. One day the young men went to Khaṇḍerae forest to hunt by themselves alone, and the girls also had gone alone to Sũṛũkuḍ[14] forest to pluck vegetables. When they had finished doing this, they came out at the foot of the Capakiṛ Fig tree[15] and were playing swinging on the pendulous roots of the Fig tree. Thereupon they shifted and commenced to dance ḍahar[16] and sang:

The ants, the ants swarm, O mother,
On the lower branches of the Capakiṛ Fig tree they swarm.

Having become tired from hunting the young men were coming out of the forest bringing a boi bindi deer[17] with them. Hearing the singing of the girls they said: "Listen you, who are singing?" Then they left the deer there and went to the girls and commenced to dance with them. Dancing along they became delighted. The eldest young man chose for himself the eldest girl and the youngest boy the youngest girl, and in this way all of them did. Thereupon the eldest young man and the eldest girl went to have a look at the deer. At that time the other ones sang:

Along under the Fig tree to the young deer,
O mother, quick to see the young boi bindi deer.

Then all of them became pairs of their own accord. Having observed this Haṛam and Buḍhi said: "They have found each other, we shall marry them". Then they (two) built a house; in this they made seven rooms; when this was ready, they brewed beer; having done this all of them drank; when they had drunk, Haṛam and Buḍhi put them, one pair in each of the seven rooms, the eldest young man with the eldest girl, the youngest boy with the youngest girl, in this way all of them. In this way their marriages were performed.

After this all of them got children. They were growing up. Then Haṛam and Buḍhi said: "When there were no others, we two joined and became a pair and brought forth and multiplied them, seven boys and seven girls, and these children we have also married, brothers and sisters; but these we two shall make into septs; let no brothers and sisters be married". Then they divided them into septs. The eldest boy became Hãsdaḳ, the one following him Murmu, the next Kisku, the one after him Hẹmbrọm, the one following him Maṛọḍi, the one after him Soṛẹn, and the one following him Ṭuḍu. Then they said to them: "Join them together in marriage in this way: don't marry them with one of their

[137] [92]

[14] The forest names probably refer to the names of the trees there. Khaṇḍerae is the name of a bush known in Muṇḍari, but not any more in Santali; sũṛũkuḍ is Salix tetrasperma, Roxb., common in the Santal country. [15] Ficus tomentosa, L. [16] Ḍahar, a cart-track, a road, also the name of a certain Santal dance. [17] A mythical unknown deer.

2: Skrefsrud M-5 (1870-1871) 1942 AW42 Santal AW42

let us cut him down!" Then they mounted on each others' shoulders to reach him; but he kicked them, so that they fell down — thud thud. From that time the Muslims have no hair on their head; they have only a chin-beard. We feel more angry with the Muslims and abhor them more than all other races. 539

From Campa the ancestors fled to Tọṛe Pokhori Baha Bandela[32]. There they stayed for a very long time. Somehow or other also the Dekos entered the open country there in great numbers. Then the country-people came together at the foot of the tope sarjọm, labar atnaĸ, the bent Mahua tree; having spread out Lotus-leaves (to sit on) and drinking the water of the Kọṛọ spring, they, whether for twelve years or for twelve days, legislated and ruled, viz., from this day, when we have ceremonies in connexion with birth, with the giving of full social rights, with marriage and wedlock, with dying and death, we shall act and follow such and such customs. There our ancestors, who knows for what reason, upset the rules of the ancient ancestors. Much was mixed up for us with what the Dekos have. In a former age our ancient ancestors did not cremate their dead ones, nor did they take them to the river; they buried them. At marriages they did not apply sindur to the bride either. All this we have learnt from the Dekos[33].

Then they broke up from there and passed through Tọṛe Pokhori Baha Bandela, who knows whether along the embankment or over the Lotus-leaves, and came up at the foot of the Icạĸ tree[34], that is to say, the men, and the women came up at the foot of the Mahua tree. Then they saw that neither had had their foot-soles wetted, nor had the Lotus-leaves been broken; therefore they said: "We have ruled well; let these very rules and customs remain ours for ever and always." They remained there for a very long time.

Then they fled from there also, who knows for what reason. Some people say, because they feared the Muslims. As they passed along they came to the Bạṛi baḍwaĸ forest. No one was willing to go in there in front of the others; therefore they said: "We shall no one go in front of the others, we shall go in a row beside each other." Then they would cross the forest. At the Jona Jospur plain they came out and gathered there; and they asked each other: "How is it, have we all come through and out or not?" There also they tried to remain; they were in no way able to stay; therefore they went to Khaspal Belaoñja. Whilst living there they were scattered, some to Sir, some to Sikhạr[35] and some to Nagpur. From that time we have mostly been under the Dekos. Only the Kharwars and Birhọr who have joined in marriage with Dekos have landlords of their own; as for us we have lost the name of Kharwar, who knows why. Some people say

[32] The place mentioned is generally taken to be situated somewhere to the northwest of the sources of the Damuda river. The first part of the name seems to be that of a dug tank (pukhṛi). [33] That the Santals and their ancestors have introduced Hindu customs, adapted to their own needs and ideas, is easily ascertained. [34] Woodfordia floribunda, Salis. [35] Some of the places mentioned are probably in the present Chota Nagpur. Sir is said to be to the southwest of Sikhar, and this lies in a southerly direction from Hazaribagh.

[823 177 137 823]

2: Skrefsrud M-5 (1870-1871) 1942 AW42 Santal AW42

852 a loin-string round the waist of the child. After this the child's mother sits down under the eaves of the house and takes the child in her arms; and she takes some atuaḷ leaves[3] together with her child in her arms.

Now the midwife kneads some cow's dung with water on the eaves, and lets also some dung-water drip down on the child's mother; and receiving some dung-water in her left hand she daubs her head with it and sucks a little in. The child's mother then goes inside and lays the child down on a bedstead. Now the midwife mixes flour in water in three leaf-cups; the flour-water of one cup she sprinkles on all the four legs of the bedstead and thereupon throws this leaf-cup away. After this she sprinkles the flour-water of another leaf-cup first on the village priest, after him on the field priest, after him on the village headman, after him on his deputy, the village headman of morals and his deputy and on the messenger of the village headman, on their breasts. And after these on all the men of the village, on their breasts.

Thereupon she sprinkles the flour-water of the remaining leaf-cup, first on the wife of the village priest, after her on the wife of the field priest, after her on the wife of the village headman, after her on the wife of his deputy, after her on the wife of the headman of morals and on the wife of his deputy, and after her on the wife of the headman's messenger, and after these on all the women of the village, on their breasts.

Now the husband and wife of the house ask each other: Whom shall we name? Then they say if it is a boy: We shall name father, or in case it is a girl: We shall name mother. The first born boy gets the name of his father's father, and the first girl gets the name of her father's mother. The second born gets the name of his mother's father, and the second girl the name of her mother's mother. Those who come afterwards get the names of the brothers and sisters of the father and mother.

Now the midwife comes out into the courtyard, and telling them the name she greets them one after the other and says to them: From to-day please call out to him using this name when hunting and chasing, in case it is a boy, and if it is a girl: Come along you, if you will go and fetch water.

Thereupon they bring gruel with nim[4] in leaf-cups out to the courtyard. They give it first to the village priest and the other village officials in the order mentioned, and after these to all the men of the village. Afterwards they give the village priest's wife and so on all the women. Now the defilement is wiped out, and the child has come in among its relatives. Five days later the barber and the midwife again shave the child alone. Then all is finished.

759 What the midwife by customary right gets is as follows: When a boy is born, she gets a piece of cloth, three cubits long, and one maund (i. e., nearly 40 kg) paddy and one wristlet for cutting the umbilical cord; and if it is a girl, she gets a piece of cloth, three cubits long, twenty seers of paddy and one wristlet for cutting the umbilical cord.

[3] Terminalia tomentosa, W. & A. [4] Melia Azadirachta, L. (Melia indica, Brandis).

2: Skrefsrud M-5 (1870-1871) 1942 AW42 Santal AW42

881

All then drink this beer.

881
539

Thereupon they commence the recitation. How the world was created, and how the Santals have from that time come, feeding like the silk-worm, to the different countries, all this they tell, in order that the children may not forget it. When enumerating this they reach the words "they were scattered here and there", they mention Hikim pargana, the first overchief in the Sikhar country; they say: Hikim pargana said to them: Come along, we shall settle down; I have spied out for us virgin forest, virgin soil. The ancestors said: Come along, let us help him; we shall clear jungle, burning and felling; we shall support ourselves and get a living. Having come together there they joined in marriages; they cleared the jungle, burning and felling; they kept the iṛi and erba seed hidden away in gourd-shells, big and small; what they had sown as iṛi grew up into erba ears; what they had sown as erba grew up into iṛi ears. What they had cleared by burning they would watch, the iṛi and erba ripened; now birds might eat it; then they said: Come, we shall keep watch. The fowls cluck, the lizards nod, and the birds also chirp. Consequently at this time two persons keep watch, husband and wife. They had cleared the jungle at the junction of roads, at the cross-road. They both keep watch; while keeping watch they climb a slanting dry poporo tree[9] and play; and by the grace of Thakur the broken grain, the husked grain was not spilled, was not scattered; it came well down from the dry poporo tree. And when it 'trod' the earth it became religiously, ceremoniously unclean.

On the day of the pestle, on the day of the mortar we are first; on the day of fire, on the day of flame we are first, at the dug hole with percolated water, at the pool water we are first; at the day of fetching firewood, at the day of fetching leaves we are first; those of you who would not go, these also we made go; let this especially be your grief. (The village people here answer: Those who are grieving have gone to Someo's narrow sloping valley[10], to the fine sand to be crocodile herds.) Now we humbly beseech you village people, from to-day, when we are having the cleansing at birth, the social initiation, we have run into debt, we borrowed at the Sundi house, the Hadi house[11]; then we provided, collected (the needful), and then we asked you, invited you to come. Consequently you came on your legs, we received you with our heads, as regards sitting and standing, as regards this also we overlooked and left it half-done: high seats, a high verandah, as regards this also we are lacking and in want. Now we beseech you, on the day of marriage, the day of wedlock, on the day of cleansing at birth, the day of social initiation, the day of dying, the day of death, we shall work and earn to squeeze out the beer, we shall work and earn to draw water, we shall work and earn to stitch the leaves

[137]
[823]
[564]

[9] Poporo (or more commonly pōpṛō or popro), Gardenia latifolia, Allen. Here fig. about the wife.
[10] Somae sokra, acc. to tradition, a place near the sources of the Damuda river. [11] Sundi is the beer-brewing Hindu low-caste; Hadi the Hindu low-caste scavenger.

2: Skrefsrud M-5 (1870-1871) 1942 AW42 Santal AW42

From Jheṭ to Bhador (i. e., from the middle of May to the middle of August) they do agricultural work. Then they plough from morning to noon, and later on they work making ricefield-ridges and so on. First they sow millets and jungle corn, later janhę millet, maize, bajṛa, kǫdę, raheṛ, ghaṅgra, and sutri[1]. After this they sow paddy for transplanting. They hoe the maize (in this the women help them). They do the first ploughing for paddy-planting; thereupon they plough the second time, thereupon plough the third time; they also make ready the ricefield ridges; they make the fields muddy and harrow; then they pull the paddy seedlings out. (To plant the paddy is women's work.) 462 221 241

At this time they sow cotton and tilmiṅ oilseed[2] in the course of the month of San (middle of July to middle of August). In Bhador (middle of August to middle of September) they plough the fields for hǫṛęć and surguja[3] and sow these. They harvest the maize. In this work and in hoeing the cotton the women help them. They harvest the iṛi, gundli, kǫdę, and erba millets[4]. In this work also the women assist them. The men thresh.

In the month of Dasāe (middle of September to middle of October) they plough the homestead field where the maize was, and sow mustard seed, and they harvest and thresh janhę millet and the early paddy. In Aghāṛ (middle of November to middle of December) they dig and plane the threshing-floor, and together with the women they harvest the paddy, cut the bajṛa and tilmiṅ, cut the raheṛ, pluck the ghaṅgra and sutri, and pull out the hǫṛęć and surguja. The women alone pull out the cotton. When the men have carted all this up to the threshing-floor, they spread it out on this, and joining cattle together they thresh. Having threshed out the seed they throw the straw away, having winnowed the grain they make a heap of it, and having twisted straw-ropes and straw-strings they put it into bundles. The other crops they beat out and put into bundles. Thereupon they cart all to their houses. In the month of Magh (middle of January to middle of February) they harvest the mustard and cut the thatching grass. Now the agricultural work is finished.

Besides all this work the men have all business with the money-lenders, and they pay the rent to the village headman. Men and women help each other to press oil in the oil-press. They do not make oil from the mustard and tilmiṅ; they sell this. They make oil from several kinds of fruit: kūiṇḍi, bạru, kujri, bando, boṅga sarjǫm, eraḍǫm, lǫpǫṅ, kǫrǫṅj, nim, and others[5]. 258 462 [426] [443]

[1] Janhę is Paspalum scrobiculatum, L.; bajṛa, Sorghum vulgare, Pers.; kǫdę, Eleusine coracana, Gaertn.; raheṛ, Cajanus indicus, Spreng.; ghaṅgra, Dolichos Catjang, Willd.; sutri, Phaseolus calcaratus, Roxb.
[2] Tilmiṅ, Sesamum indicum, DC. [3] Hǫṛęć, Dolichos biflorus, L. Surguja, Guizotia abyssinica, Cass.
[4] Iṛi, Panicum Crus-galli, L.; gundli, Panicum miliare, Lamarck; kǫdę, Eleusine coracana, Gaertn.; erba, Setaria italica, Kunth. [5] Kūiṇḍi, the fruit of the Mahua tree, Bassia latifolia, Roxb.; bạru, Schleichera trijuga, L.; kujri, Celastrus paniculatus, Willd.; bando, Spatholobus Roxburghii, Benth.; boṅga sarjǫm, Ventilago calyculata, Tulasne; eraḍǫm, Ricinus communis, L.; lǫpǫṅ, Terminalia belerica, Roxb.; kǫrǫṅj, Pongamia glabra, Vent.; nim, Malia Azadirachta, L.

137

782 them: Please, Lords, the promise you gave is a promise, your promise is a golden promise,
ours is a skin promise, please give us a hand-given promise, before you leave. A promise
776 given is a promise, a promise of luck and good fortune, may they never become false and worthless. Thereupon the bongas, one after the other, give to the priest the rice they have in their hand. The village people then say: Please, Lords, it has been a long time, and it is very late, the horses, the umbrellas in the Siṅ forest, the Man forest[6], dig and fill their stomach with hasa vegetables, with ḍimbu vegetables[7]. Then the possessed men regain consciousness. The rice mentioned the men who were possessed take. And having reached the village they enter the headman's house, where they give them food. This is the way in which the bongas are brought up in the sacred grove.

d. The assistants of the village headman.

622 Thereupon all the men come together at the Mạṅjhi (the village headman). He has
brewed beer. Now as he deems the men in the village fit, in accordance with this he chooses
624 some to assist him in the village; he appoints them to positions: You become our Paranik, you become our Goḍet. And if there are sufficient people, he will at the same time also appoint a Jọg Mạṅjhi and a Jọg Paranik. And one for whom it is possible to offer his own blood, he will appoint to be Kuḍạm Naeke. He gives them beer; they drink and then gradually go home.

622 The Mạṅjhi is the head of the village people. All people in the village will have to follow his lead. In ordering and inviting, in calling and restraining, at the namegiving, at the initiating festivals, at marriages, when hunting and chasing, at feasts and festivals, at religious instruction and worship, in connexion with rice and curry, with beer and liquor, with spirits and mountain spirits, in quarrelling and squabbling, in strife and dispute, when there is hunger and thirst, with landlords and money-lenders, when crime and misdeeds occur, in connexion with thefts and stealing, with medicine and witchcraft, with wenches and strumpets, when there is fighting and killing, murder and wickedness, in grief and sorrow, in calamities and dangers, in illness and pain, at dying and falling away, at ceremonies in connexion with death and decease, at cremation and the final funeral ceremonies: in connexion with all this the Mạṅjhi has the responsibility.

624 The Paranik is the headman's assistant, like a prime minister, and when there is no Mạṅjhi, the Paranik rules the village. If the headman should run away, and there are no sons or male relatives of his, the Paranik becomes Mạṅjhi. Or if the Mạṅjhi dies without having sons, and there also are no male relatives of his in the village, then also the Paranik becomes Mạṅjhi.

[131] [137]

[6] The Siṅ and Man forests seem to have reference to the Singbhum and Manbhum districts to the South-west of the Santal Parganas. Santals have been and are still living in those districts. [7] Hasa is a Rusilla; ḍimbu a creeper.

2; Skreferud M-5 (1870-1871) 1942 AW42 Santal AW42

572 also become intimate friends, and also elderly women; but the time for becoming intimate friends is really when men and women are young.

Cattle-herd boys become great comrades, and mostly at this time intimate friendship between them is established. Those among the comrades whose hearts are especially bound together, become intimate friends; they stay together, they blow the flute, they kill birds, hares, and peafowls; they sing, they drive the cattle about by turns, and they help each other when there is any danger. They eat rice from the same leaf-plate, and when they kill birds or anything they divide and eat them. When they kill a hare, they give the killer the hind half. Persons who have become intimate friends in their boyhood, do not forget each other even when they have grown old, they remain friends all life long. When they, after having lost sight of each other, meet again long afterwards, they become very glad; they kiss each other.

Girls also become intimate friends in the same way, and it lasts all life long with them. Instead of the fellowship of the boys girls become what is called karam-branch friends. If the hearts of two girls have been bound fast together, they will at a karam festival* take two leaves of a branch and put these upon each other's head and thereupon salute all the people there. Afterwards they give the village people beer and food. These two do not address each other using their names, but address each other saying "karam branch". Young men and girls do not become intimate friends, except in connexion with marriage.

[178] Nowadays the intimacy of former days is being lost; the mind of the people is going to the bad. People mostly look out for their own happiness, let other people have whatever may happen.

m. Sticking together of the village people.

621 628 The Santals consider it an honour when their village is honoured, and they feel it a dishonour when their village is dishonoured; therefore if some one in their village gets into a quarrel with people of another village, then the whole village stands up for him. And if they hear any disgraceful statement concerning their own village, they apply to the headman of their village; thereupon they all, the village headman included, seize such people and say to them: Prove to us what you have spoken about us; otherwise we are not letting you off. If they are unable to substantiate it, they fine them very heavily. If any village has become famed, then the people of this village, when meeting with the people of the country in connexion with any matter, feel themselves high like hills; they take pride in the reputation of their village, even when they themselves are fools.

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[137] * The karam is a large forest tree, Adina cordifolia H. f. & B. The karam festivals will be described later on.

3i Mukherjea O. Y-4, 5 (ca. 1933-1939) 1962
AW42 Santal AW42

[P.46]

CHAPTER II

HABITAT AND POPULATION

131 In this pear-shaped Bharatbarsa ranges after
[133] ranges of hills belonging to the present provinces of Bengal, Bihar and Orissa, roll on towards Central India. This wide area lies roughly between 20° and 28° North Latitude and 83° and 92° East Longitude. Santal Parganas, Bhagalpur, Monghyr, Manbhum, Hazaribagh and Singbhum now claimed by Bihar; Mayurbhanj and Balasore now falling within Orissa; and Birbhum, Bankura and Midnapore still belonging to Bengal, fall within the area and form the habitat of different aboriginal tribes, of whom the Santals are the objects of our present study. Speaking
[361] approximately, the Santal settlements are found distributed over an area of 350 miles from the Ganges to the Baitarani, fairly bisected by the 87° Eastern Longitude.

133 A bird's-eye view of the topography of the portions of Bihar and of Orissa falling within our purview will reveal large areas of rock, laterite and
[137] gravel. Hills after hills form into ranges, bare of vegetation during the summer months and green
137 again with the rains. Clusters of Sal trees (*Shorea robusta*), Mohua (*Bassia latifolia*), Karam (*Adina*

3t Mukherjea O. Y-4,5 (ca. 1933-1939) 1962
AW42 Santal AW42

cordifolia), Pipal (*Ficus religiosus, Willd*), Palas (*Butea frondosa*) lac-bearing Kusum (*Schleichera trijuga*) are the flora here to be seen in profusion.

Of these, the most predominant and characteristic tree to the Santal areas is the Sal, called *Sarjom* by them, and its distribution is general. It is a tree yielding a hard timber, straight and tall and shining with glossy leaves. It is holy with them, and with it they make their Jahèrthan, (*Holy Grove*). Such straggling clusters of Sal trees are found all over the countryside near Santal hamlets. The Sal serves them the same purpose as the bamboo to the rest of the population. With its leaves they make leaf-cups and plates and its timber invariably goes to their house-building. More useful is the Mohua. Its flower contains sugar and is therefore sweet to eat and nutritious too. The Santal preserves it as food by drying it in the sun and it serves them well for months to come. It serves the same purpose as the mango and the jack-fruit to the rest of the population, who during those seasons take them as their chief diet. The pulp of the fruit is eaten and its kernel yields an oil which is chiefly used by the tribe for their culinary purposes.

March and April are months of joy for the Santal like the Cherry-blossom season in Japan. The Mohua and Sal trees are then in full blossom with their whitish flowers. In the early morning one sees

3t Mukherjea O. Y-4, 6 (ca. 1933-1939) 1962
AW42 Santal AW42

824 In the early morning one sees
[22] the ground strewn with the flowers and the Santals
[222] carefully gather the mohua flowers in the baskets. The Pipal, with its gnarled roots and spreading branches serves as the resting place and meeting ground of the Santals, and the Palas with its yellowish blaze of colour dazzles the country-side in the wintry months of the year.[1]

137 Large tracts of forests are frequently found
136 within the area, the abode of ferocious tigers, elephants, *sambar* deer, leopards, hyaenas, deer and wild-pigs. The marshes abound in wild-ducks, pigeons, geese, snipe and partridge.

132 In the summer months, the heat is intense and rises in places upto 120° degrees and dust-storms and "loo" (*heat-wave*) are the rules rather than the exception. The rain-fall compared to Bengal is very low but it is cold during the winter, the minimum record being on an average 40° degrees.

133 The area in Bengal that falls within our scope
137 is a belt of irregular thickness and furnishes a gradual change from the plateau to the plains of Bengal in an undulation, interspersed with forest growths at places. Here, more specially in Bankura, small isolated hillocks and short ranges of low hills, form,

1. Ref. *Dt. Gazetteer*, Santal Parganas, Vol. XXII, pp. 16-17. It is however incorrectly stated therein that that the *Palas* is in blossom in the hot season of the year, for it is only peculiar to the winter.

3t Mukherjea O. Y-4,5 (ca. 1933-1939) 1962
AW42 Santal AW42

what Hunter calls, "the advance guard of the hill system of the central India Plateau." Midnapur resembles Bankura more or less in topography; but it is not so hilly. It has its laterite soil, mohua and sal trees,—a characteristic back-ground inseparable from the Santals.

Distributed throughout this wide area live the Santal, a man of medium size but muscular and strong, with a complexion varying from light-brown to an ebony colour, almost beardless and his ox-eyed, merry women-folk. The physical features that distinguish them from the rest of the population are that they have a round outline and look rather stout. They have, what is called by Col. Dalton, "a blubbery style of face," noses broad with a depressed bridge, and hair black, straight, coarse and curly. The mouth is a large one and the lips thick and projecting; "the zygomatic arches prominent, while the proportions of the skull, approaching the dolichocephalic type, conclusively refute the hypothesis of their Mongolian descent."[1]

Although the theory of Mongolian descent of the Santal is no longer tenable, it is worth noting that faces of a Mongoloid type are sometimes seen amongst them. Rev. Bodding has seen "spots in the pigment of the skin of Santal children, which,

1 Ref. Risley, *People of India*, App. VIII, p. clvii.

31 Mukherjea O. Y-4,5 (ca. 1933-1939) 1962
AW42 Santal AW42

"dumbu pitha," is shaped like eggs with powdered rice, treacle and salt. It was explained to us that in the process of baking an earthen pot has to be placed on an oven with water. The cake is then placed on a miniature bamboo basket and simmered in steam.

Various kinds of edible leaves are eaten by the Santals, among them "Siñ aṛak'" (A small tree, *Bauhinia Purpurea*, Linn., the leaves of which are eaten as a pot-herb), "Purai aṛak'," (Beng. Pui sang, *Basella Alba*, Linn.) "Kedok' aṛak'" (The supper pot-herb, *Argyreia speciosa*, Sweet; Oriya, Kendo sang), "Maṭha aṛak'" (A pot-herb, *Antidesma Diandrum*, Tulas; Oriya, *Khata*) and "Mungà aṛak'" (Horse-radish leaves, *Moringa pterygosperma*, Gaertn.) deserve mention. These are generally boiled in water and eaten with salt, and as an occasional luxury fried with "mohua" oil. The Santal, we learnt, has no relish for mustard oil, the favourite culinary recipe of the Bengalis. Besides, they eat various kinds of flowers like "mohua," (*Bassia Latifolia*), Horse-radish (Bengali, *sajina*), "Kohnḍa baha" (pumpkin flower, *Cucurbita moscheta, Duchsne*) fried with "mohua" oil when available, or boiled simply in water. They do not use spices or even turmeric in the preparation of these flower dishes, the exception being garlic, onion and pepper.

3t Mukherjea O. Y-4, 5 (ca. 1933-1939) 1962
AW42 Santal AW42

262 Another article of food, called "Hàṇḍuà," pre-
252 pared from the young shoots of the bamboo is relished by them. We learn that when the shoots of the bamboo are a foot or so above the ground they are gathered and taken home. They are then cut into thin slices and ground in the "ḍheñki" (*husking implement*) into a kind of flour. This flour is put into a pot, the air being excluded, and
[251] allowed to stand for three days. It is then taken out and spread upon a flat stone and dried. It is then "hàṇḍuà" and is used to make "utu" (*relish*) and "bhàrtà" (*chutney*).[1]

262 Among fruits eaten raw, "Ul" (mango), ripe
252 "Matkòm" (Beng. *Mohua* ; *Bassia Latifolia*), ripe
• 137 "Kaṇṭhar" (jack-fruit, *Artocarpus Integrifolia*, Linn.), ripe figs (Santali, *Loa* ; the fruit of *Ficus glomerata*, Roxb.), "Banyan fruit" (*Ficus Bengalensis*, Roxb ; Santali, *Bare*), "Terel" (*Kendu*, Oriya, Beng. *Gab* ; *Diospyros Tomentosa*), "Tarop" (Charkuli, Oriya; *Buchanania latifolia*), "Kankuri" [(Oriya Cucumber; *Cucumis sativus*, Linn.)] and "Bhurudu" (Santali for a jungle produce, *Gardenia S.P.*) deserve mention.

Fruits also constitute items in kitchen delicacies and green-mangoes (*Mangifera Indica*), tamarind (*Tamarindus Indica*), the peel of the "mohua" fruit,

1 Ref.: Dr. Campbell's *Santali to English Dictionary*, p. 234.

31 Mukherjea O. Y-4,5 (ca. 1933-1939) 1962
AW42 Santal AW42

boiled in water and mixed with salt and turmeric, serve as sauces in the Santal dinner.

We have already got some idea about the Santal use of "mohua" oil in cooking. This oil, they massage also over their bodies, but after and not before their daily ablution, as is the custom with some Hindus. Like the rest of the world, they delight in a smoke of tobacco. We have already noticed the preparation of the "pungi", the Santal cigarette, called also *chuti* in the Santal Parganas. This is, we were told, men's monopoly, the women smoking only occasionally. But raw tobacco, mixed with lime in the form of "khaini" (*Hindi*) is chewed frequently by both men and women as a perpetual stimulant.

No review of the material background of Santal life will be complete without a reference to their domestic animals. Cows, buffaloes, sheep and goats meet your eyes in the cattle-yard; pigs grunt, geese cackle and fowls flutter about mixed up with pigeons flying down from their improvised nests inside earthen pitchers suspended from roofs.

Drink

"Give me rice-beer, or give me death," may be the summary of a Santal's instinctive craving for

4: Biswas D, E-3, 4 (1931-1945) 1956
AW42 Santal AW42
SANTAL PARGANAS

HUNTING

Hunting:—In hunting the Santals are particularly expert. Nothing pleases them so much as to be out after game with bows and arrows. As soon as they come to know that a party is out for hunting they give up their work and join the party. Hunting was one of the earliest methods of the Santals for the search of food. As except the reserved forests, the real forests have mostly disappeared, so game which they get by hunting is extremely poor. Consequently they are now compelled to adopt agriculture as their main source for collecting food. Still they celebrate the annual hunting (Dehri hunting) excursion of a magico-religious nature. The Dehri hunting, which is the most important hunting of the Santals, takes place once a year in the month of Falgun (February and March). Dehri, their hunting priest carries a big branch of a Sal-tree (shorea robusta) with leaves and goes to the market, where people seeing him understand the purpose of his coming. As each leaf represents a day so they count them all and go out for hunting just after the number of days as indicated by the leaves of the branch. In this hunting expedition people of distant villages take part. The Dehri is responsible for the hunt, i. e. (all goes well and no mishap occurs). By divination he finds out as to who are threatened by any danger during the hunt, and advises them to turn back but they generally make him sacrifice fowls for them to Sin-Bonga to avert the impending calamity. He performs some ceremony and offers sacrifices to bongas

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that reason. Gradual deforestation and the absence of any effective protection for wild animals account for the present scarcity. Leopards, once present in great numbers, are now rare, though black bears are still relatively common. Some of the smaller kinds of Indian deer are found. It is many years since a tiger was killed in the Bankura district. Wild pigs are abundant, and so is the jungle hare, and there are many species of bird whose flesh is prized by the Santal. Every male of the tribe is an expert with the bow and arrow, and he is trained in its use from early childhood. The village parties hold together; they carry their own rations of rice and dried *matkom* cake for the night meal, and they are accompanied by their sleek and well-fed dogs. The men are dressed in loin-cloths, but they wear turbans roughly wrapped round their heads for protection against the heat of the sun. Some of the younger boys carry drums instead of weapons. The drums are used to swell the noise in the forest as the animals are driven closer towards the centre and to signal a kill, but they are also needed for the dancing that will follow. The flesh of the animals is distributed according to a regular code, though the rules are passing from use and now it is usual for the stronger of two parties to take the flesh of a kill when it is in dispute. The man who draws first blood receives the *madol*, consisting of one hind-leg, a part of which he must give to the headman of his village. If the man who first touches the animal belongs to a different village, he receives a shoulder; if it has been slain by yet another person than the one who drew first blood, the slayer receives five ribs, one fore-leg and the liver. The *dihri* receives the neck, and the remainder of the flesh goes to the co-villagers of the man who wounded the animal and not of the man who killed it. When the meat is distributed among the villagers, those who carry drums receive a double portion, and some of the meat is given to the dogs.

By evening several hundred men gather in the place where they are to spend the night. Camp fires are lit near some watercourse, and the moon rises slowly over the graceful palms that fringe the water and the belt of *sarjom* trees beyond. For some it is a night of hard work, for others it is a night of revelry. The elders from all the villages are gathered together for this one night during the year and form the supreme council of the tribe. The disputes which have baffled their several efforts in the course of the year are brought forward. Complaints involving members of more than one village are voiced and range